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Minutes of Conference between  
Delegates from European Refugee  
Committees and the Executive of  
The Council for German Jewry  
held on the 23rd April, 1936.

Present: Sir Herbert Samuel (in the Chair)  
Mr. M. Gottschalk (Belgium)  
Professor D. Cohen (Holland),  
Mr. Siva (Belgium) were the delegates from the  
European Refugee Committees.

Sir Osmond E. d'Avigdor Goldsmid, Bt.  
Mr. Norman Bentwich, Mr. J.L. Cohen,  
Sir Wyndham Deedes, Mr. Julius Jacobs,  
Mr. Neville J. Laski, Mr. Otto H. Schiff,  
Mr. A.S. Brothman, Mr. L. Bakstansky and  
Mr. H. Stephany, were also present.

Mr. Gottschalk speaking for the delegates from the  
Refugee Committees stated that they had been appointed to  
confer with the Council for German Jewry, firstly regarding  
the collection which it was proposed to make and secondly with  
reference to the plan for the emigration of Jews from Germany.

He said that whilst their Committees were prepared to  
make efforts to raise funds in their respective countries,  
they desired to know that such funds would first be used  
towards the maintenance and ultimate emigration of the German  
Refugees who were at present in those countries. They felt  
that a visit by members of the Council for German Jewry might  
result in larger sums being collected.

As regards emigration, he considered the Hicem was the  
proper body through which such emigration could best be carried  
out, but its resources which were at present mainly obtained  
from the ICA would have to be augmented if it was expected to  
deal with a larger number of Refugees. Experience had shown  
that it was much easier to place trained Refugees than those  
who were untrained. As an instance, he stated that the IC  
representative in Montevideo had reported that of 220 Refugees  
who had arrived in Montevideo 63 were trained and 157 untrained.  
All of the trained people had found employment within a very  
short space of time, but it had been difficult to place the  
untrained ones. The Council should take up the question of  
training of Germans for emigration.

Dr. Cohen of Holland agreed that a visit by members of the  
Council would be helpful to his Committee to enable them to  
collect further money. In his view the problem resolved itself  
into one of emigration. There were six or seven hundred  
Refugees at present in Holland, who could not be sent to other  
countries, and the cost of maintaining these Refugees was  
enormous. The Refugee Committee in Holland feared a large  
influx of Refugees from Germany after the Olympic Games, the  
Government would not be prepared to keep the frontiers open  
unless there was some guarantee that these Refugees would be  
maintained by the Refugee Committee and ultimately emigrate  
to some country where they could maintain themselves.

Sir Herbert Samuel apologised for the absence of Lord  
Bearsted and Mr. Simon Marks, both of whom were abroad, but  
pointed out that the present meeting included Representatives  
of the ICA, the Refugee Committee in London and the Board of  
Deputies. He said that the object of the funds was to raise  
a sum of £15 millions which was to be used primarily for the

emigration of 100,000 Jews from Germany and it was hoped that efforts would be made in the various countries in Europe to assist in this work. Any money raised in the various countries should be used first to cover the needs of the Refugee Committees in those countries and towards the cost of emigrating the Refugees. Members of the Council would be prepared to help in the collecting if it was thought they could do so.

Of the three million pounds it was hoped to raise, America had been asked to provide two million and England and Europe, one million.

The I.C.J. had this year provided a sum of £70,000 towards the cost of resettling Jews from Germany.

The Council hoped to remove 100,000 of the younger Jews from Germany, and also these Refugees who are at present in countries outside Germany and in order that this object might be carried out training and emigration are the two things which must be undertaken.

The efforts of the various Committees must be concentrated on training the Germans whether they were at present in Germany or whether they were Refugees in countries outside Germany. In the Refugee Countries, a number of Germans with their own money had set up new businesses and had been able to employ some thousands of the country's own nationals. In England it was authoritatively stated that between six and seven thousands of English persons had been employed in businesses which had been set up by Germans, and in Holland 85 businesses had been established by Germans who employ between 4 and 5 thousand Dutch workpeople. An extension of the re-establishment of Germans in countries outside Germany should be encouraged.

Sir Herbert referred to the allegation which had been made that the American Consuls were making difficulties in supplying Germans with visas to go to America even when they had the necessary papers and qualifications, and he stated that the Emigration Committee of the Council for German Jewry was preparing a dossier of such cases. He asked the delegates to instruct their Committees to send details of any such case to the Emigration Committee as soon as possible.

Sir Osmond E. d'Avigdor Goldsmid speaking as the Representative of the I.C.J., said that the Hicem had been maintained almost entirely out of the resources of the I.C.J., and if they had more money they would be able to increase their activities. He thought that the Council for German Jewry should indicate to the Hicem how much money would be placed at the latter's disposal in 1936. He said that in a discussion with Mr. Gottschalk on the previous evening regarding the training of Refugees from Germany, reference had been made to a scheme which was just being carried out for the training of young men in acetylene welding, as it was understood that there was a demand for persons who could do this work in nearly all countries of the world, and he had asked Mr. Gottschalk to submit a scheme. Mr. Bentwich stated that the new body for artisan training in France, the successor of the old agriculture et artisanat, had already arranged to place twenty young men in a special School in Paris to learn acetylene welding. The course arranged would take about four months.

Mr. Schiff stated that his experience was that trained people could be placed much more easily than untrained and that after a training of about twelve or eighteen months, positions

could be found for a number of people up to the age of about 30, but that great difficulty had been experienced in dealing with those Refugees of about 40 years of age. The majority of these had been Bank Clerks, Lawyers, and it was exceedingly difficult to retrain them for some work, which would ultimately enable them to earn their living.

The Chairman pointed out that the following points had emerged from the discussion:-

Firstly, that visits to European countries from members of the Council for German Jewry would be welcomed by the Committees in those countries in order to help them to collect further funds.

Secondly, that so far as emigration was concerned the Hicem was the body best able to undertake the emigration of the Jews to various countries abroad, and that with more money at its disposal the Hicem could place more people. He suggested that the Hicem should be asked to submit a plan showing what could be done with say £50,000 or £100,000.

Thirdly, that the emigration and training Committee which it was proposed, should be formed by the Council for German Jewry should work in closest co-operation with the Refugee Committees and Training Organisations in the various countries in Europe such as Holland, Belgium and France in order that the work of training might be co-ordinated and overlapping prevented.

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Council for German Jewry: Minutes. 23 Apr. 1936. TS Archives of the Central British Fund for World Jewish Relief, 1933-1960 16.